DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 095 560 CS 201 517

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TITLE Functions of Media Behaviors.
PUB DATE Aug 74
NOTE 33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism (57th, San Diego, August 18-21, 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Higher Education; *Journalism; Listening Habits; *Mass Media; *Media Research; Newspapers; Radio; Reading Habits; *Research Design; *Research Tools; Television Viewing
IDENTIFIERS *Media Behavior Unit

ABSTRACT

Individuals engage in media behavior several times daily. If a medium is actually used, that decision is one of a series of points which constitute a media behavior unit. The media behavior unit is used in several ways. First, by looking at particular attributes, researchers can determine whether an individual is consistent in medium behavior--whether John Doe usually reads the newspaper in the same sequence. If the attribute in question is not medium-bound, then researchers can determine how consistent an individual is across media behaviors--whether John Doe is more consistent in his affective evaluation of content consumed during newspaper reading than of that consumed during television viewing. Secondly, the analytic unit described allows researchers to focus on relationships in the actual media situation. For example, when people are lonely are they more likely to turn on the radio for company or do they seek a particular content? This example illustrates two concepts introduced in this paper, media-seeking and content-seeking. Content-seeking is viewed as the process in which individuals desire that a function pertaining to content be fulfilled and then engage in media behavior. In media-seeking the function the individual wants fulfilled is not tied to content. (Author/RB)

ED 095560

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FUNCTIONS OF MEDIA BEHAVIORS

by

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Paper presented to the Theory and Methodology Division, Association for Education in Journalism, San Diego, Calif. August, 1974

*The survey reported in this paper was made possible through financial support of the Research Division of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota. The author gratefully acknowledges the guidance and aid of Prof. Deniel B. Wackman, director of the Research Division.

CS 201 517

INTRODUCTION

Communication researchers have avoided conceptual models which utilize specific instances of media behaviors as the unit of analysis, preferring instead to study effects or the manner in which individuals process media content. Consequently, the shift from the media behavior unit to the individual as the unit of analysis assumes consistency in media use rather than treating this as an empirical question.* Individual decisions to read newspapers, watch television and listen to the radio may depend on a variety of factors; researchers using the individual as the analytic unit aggregate such behavior units and tend to impose an underlying dimension of consistency, focusing on the degree, frequency or amount of use, learning, importance, etc. This paper will present a conceptual model to explain media behavior units, which will then be used to examine factors affecting media-choice situations. Later we'll switch from the media behavior unit to the individual as the analytic unit to examine within medium and across media consistency.

Media behaviors will be characterized as content-seeking, media-seeking or non-seeking. By content-seeking I mean the process in which individuals desire that a function pertaining to content be fulfilled and then engage in a media behavior. An example is the woman who rushes

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*The problem of how one translates back and forth between macro and micro levels is found within all the social sciences, whether one is concerned with moving from the individual to the group (or vice versa) or from the sub-individual to (or from) the individual. Galtung (1967, p. 45) says: "The 'fallacy of the wrong level' consists not in making 'inferences' from one level of analysis to another, but in making direct 'translation of properties or relations' from one level to another, i.e., making too simple inferences. The fallacy can be committed working downwards, by projecting from groups or categories to individuals, or upwards, by projecting from individuals to higher units." Defining ecological fallacy to include movement to levels of analysis below the individual, Galtung (1967, p. 46) adds: "For analytical purposes the individual is seen as a boundary for subunits, such as psychological syndromes, role-behavior and status-behavior, time-slices in behaviorial sequences, etc. The ecological fallacy in general consists in this: 'properties found to be correlated at the higher level are assumed correlated, i.e., found within the same unit, at the lower level.' Here the fallacy would consist in believing that, because two behavioral elements are found within the same individual, they are also found in the same behavioral, temporal, spatial or mental contexts, we may choose to subdivide the individual into." The term "trans-situational" in this paper will refer to the level of analysis at which such sub-individual behavioral units have been aggregated. "Situational" will refer to concepts, relationships, analyses done with the media behavior unit as the analytic unit. For further discussion of consistency across levels of analysis, the homology thesis, see Hannan (1971).

home and turns the TV on to her favorite soap opera before even getting her coat off. In media-seeking the individual desires that a function without regard to content be fulfilled and then engages in a media behavior. Here we might find a disappointed husband, his golf game called on account of rain, turning on the TV to the same soap opera and murmuring, "Nothing else to do. I wonder what's on TV." In a third situation, Mary Doe thrusts a magazine article under Jon Doe's nose and says, "Here, read this. I was right." John Doe reads the article and his behavior is characterized as non-seeking, the media "being moved" to him rather than him moving toward the media.

A New Unit of Analysis - The Media Behavior Unit

Let's begin by delineating the media behavior unit. In the natural setting one considers engaging in a media behavior several times daily; if a medium is actually used, that decision is one of a series of points which constitute a media behavior unit. Some of the difficulties with attempts to understand why people decide to engage in media behavior stem from consideration of too limited a number of points in time.

For the first point in the model, point A in Figure 1, we must backtrack in time from the actual decision point to the existence of some function an individual wants fulfilled. John Doe is tired and wants to relax, he wants to know a ballgame score, he finishes work and has some "time to kill," he glances at the clock and remembers his favorite program is on TV. During a normal day any number of such functions may exist for John Doe, some of them being fulfilled by engaging in media behaviors, some by other leisure-time activities, some by "simple" perception or interaction with other people. When these functions do result in media behaviors, we have the first point of a media behavior unit.* Consideration of behaviors available for fulfilling the

*This view rests on the assumption that people are aware of their needs and are able to identify them. Katz et al. (1973) note the same methodological assumption in their study of media satisfaction of needs as a trans-situational concept.

existing function is the second point, point B; for example, one may consider watching TV or going for a walk. Introducing point B does not imply that the process is necessarily rational or conscious, though in some cases an individual may consciously make such a decision or series of discriminations at this point.

An individual's decision to engage in a media behavior is qualitative; one cannot half decide to watch television, though one's attention during the behavior may vary. Thus, we can view a decision to engage in a media behavior at a point in time preceding the actual behavior itself, which is point C, the third point in our model. After the program has been seen or the newspaper read, an individual may note several functions the actual behavior served, not just the one he wanted fulfilled by the behavior, point D.

It would seem realistic to view media behavior as a series of points, in the following manner:

A.	B.	C.	D.
Individual wants function to be fulfilled	Individual considers behaviors which are available to fulfill function	Individual engages in media behavior	Behavior fulfills one or more functions

Figure 1. Model of Media Behavior Unit

Although we will concern ourselves only with the first three points, several aspects of the model require mentioning. Points C and D are separated for clearer representation, though in reality some functions would be fulfilled during the actual behavior; the behavior also is frequently interrupted. Consideration of available behaviors, point B, may involve a series of discriminations between different media, between different content available in a medium, and between a media behavior and non-media behavior.

The crucial concept at point A, the beginning point of the media behavior unit, is function. Several terms have been used to refer to what I intend by the concept

of function, including: purpose, goal, need, usefulness, reason, and, motive and wish. These terms often are used interchangeably, some are distinguished from others by the conditions under which they exist, and others are conceptualized as being subsumed by another, e.g., wish and desire (English and English, 1958). Functions answer the question, "Why does one decide to engage in a media behavior?" and they may be categorized into types. The concept is not a continuous variable but one which exists in a situation or doesn't.*

The functions a media behavior actually fulfills for an individual may differ from the one he initially desired be fulfilled, but it is the initial hoped for functions that are of concern here. If we ask people why they decided to watch television at a point in time we would get a variety of answers, some mentioning particular programs, others pointing to the need to fill time -- "I had nothing else to do." As some have discovered, it can be difficult to discern patterns and similarities among people's functions.

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*Some will question the terminology employed here, perferring to use "purpose" or other terms. Gustav Bergman (1962) points out that the word "purpose" is indispensable in mental discourse and is one member of a family or words. He adds, "But the logic of any of these words is sufficiently similar to that of any other to make it safe for us to ignore those subtle differences. What matters to us is merely that in mental discourse at least one member of that family is indispensable." Bergmann goes on to discuss two uses of the term, "function," the sense in which it is employed in functional analyses, and, in the problematic sense, "to have a certain function" meaning " to serve a certain purpose." Past usage seems to have reserved "motive" and "reason" for those thoughts existing before one moves towards media, leaving "functions" for what engaging in the behavior does for the individual. Since here we're concerned with pointing out that the two may be identical or different, use of the same term, "functions," seems appropriate in that it forces us to specify time order and to ask whether the function one wanted fulfilled was actually fulfilled, and whether other functions were fulfilled as well.

A THEORY OF MEDIA-SEEKING AND CONTENT-SEEKING

Media Behavior as Analytic Unit

A variety of points of view have been used to explain why people read newspapers, watch television and listen to the radio. The theoretical framework of most researchers limits analysis to trans-situational concepts of media behavior, with the individual as the unit of analysis.* Those focusing on the specific media behavior as an analytic unit have limited media decisions to content discriminations.**

Dependent Variables

Dependent variables of the theory presented in this section rest on two distinctions, both of which may be viewed as characteristics of the analytic unit. The first is implied by the abient/adient distinction psychologists make to refer to behaviors which lead towards or away from exposure to a stimulus. Since we're primarily interested in those situations in which an individual actually engages in media behavior, only the adient behavior, one which exposes the individual to a stimulus, is relevant here. The importance of the distinction is the notion of movement. When an individual's behavior indicates movement toward the instruments of mass media, e.g., TV and radio sets, leading to exposure, we will call it seeking

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*Gallup (1930) conducted some of the earliest readership studies, providing information about gross readership of newspapers. Nafziger (1930) viewed the relationship between reading patterns and IQs. Schramm and White (1949) noted changes in readership patterns as people grow older. Katz et al. (1973) looked at mass media ranked with respect to their perceived helpfulness in satisfying clusters of needs arising from social roles and individual dispositions. See Klapper (1960) and Atkin (1973) for other examples.

**Schramm (1947) and Kay (1954) view media behavior in terms of rewards, the former distinguishing between immediate and delayed rewards. Bush (1942) describes reasons people buy newspapers. Miller's (1973) conceptualization of utility theory could provide for an investigation of why people decide to engage in media behaviors, but his methodology ties responses to content discriminations. Samuelson's (1962) study also ties the actual decision to content, but it does expand our view of what constitutes rewards in the eyes of media users.

behavior. Usually one must pick up a newspaper to read its content and one must situate himself so that he can view the TV screen or be within hearing distance of the radio; sometimes one must turn on the TV or radio. When an individual makes such movements he's seeking a medium, or its content. However, some media behaviors may occur when the individual has no control over his perception of the marks and sounds of mass media, or when he is confronted with such stimuli while moving towards such goals. In these instances the individual has not "sought" media or media content, but has been "forced," in a manner of speaking, to engage in such behavior. For example, an individual riding in an automobile may, by his presence, have to listen to the radio, though he wishes otherwise. Thus, it is possible to distinguish non-seeking media behavior from seeking media behavior.

The second distinction is that between media-seeking (MS) and content-seeking (CS). A review of the functions presented in the literature suggests differences between functions one wants fulfilled with regard to content and those one desires to be fulfilled without regard to content. The distinction also is suggested by McLuhan's (1964) comment that "the medium is the message" -- sometimes the content is unimportant and it's the medium that's sought to fulfill some functions.

Two examples illustrate this distinction: "I had nothing else to do so I watched TV" -- function does not pertain to content, and "I wanted to watch Walter Cronkite and the news" -- function pertains to content. In the case of the former the function may be fulfilled without regard to content; the indivdual could just as easily have taken a walk or gone to bed. In the case of the latter the function could only be fulfilled by watching the 5:30 p.m. news program with Walter Cronkite, though some choice may be available with cable TV. Less specificity would have widened the choice of possibilities, but in any case, the function does pertain to content. Experimental studies imposing readership of a series of articles have allowed the individual to reject content, but, by requiring that functions pertain to specific content, have not permitted examination of functions which could be fulfilled without regard to content.

We could view the MS-CS distinction as dichotomization of a continuum of specificity, the individual whose behavior is MS moving towards the medium's universe of offerings (his personal experience-based universe), another whose behavior is "gross" CS moving towards a large portion of medium content (in time, space), and still another whose behavior is content-seeking of some small detail, e.g., weather forecaster's predicted temperature for tomorrow. Finer distinctions in terms of degree of specificity of content could be made. Information-seeking, an example of content-seeking differentiated from other content-seeking only by specificity of content, has been viewed in studies of congnitive dissonance.

Independent Variables

Other characteristics of the media behavior are potentially relevant independent variables. Since this researcher is primarily interested in the subjective bases individuals give for engaging in media behaviors, two a priori components of functions will be offered: habit and emotional state change.* The number of bases an individual gives for engaging in a media behavior is open-ended; in principle an individual could cite both components as determinants of his media use.

Habit satisfaction would seem an important basis for media behaviors. Cherry (1971), emphasizing the regularity of newspapers, suggests that "subconsciously, our expectation of getting our morning or evening paper may have become more important than the news which it contains. Perhaps we feel it to be more important to 'have' a newspaper than it is to 'read' it." Though we might presume that the habit would not be maintained were not positive functions actually fulfilled by the media behavior, an individual could seek a medium or content because it was time to

*A third component of functions, suggested by studies of delayed reward, is the expected use of media content at some time in the future. This could involve motor behavior, e.g., talking about a topic, or primarily cognitive use, e.g., to understand later developments of a political issue. No such instances of future use were found in the survey and, thus, the component was excluded from the discussion.

do so or one always did so at that time; to do otherwise just wouldn't seem "right." Habit implies regularity, but the time and place constraints may vary with the individual. For example, one may say he "always" reads the newspaper, meaning every day; another person may say he "always" reads the paper after dinner. For the first person, the behavior is habitual as a daily activity while the second individual places more specific time constraints on the behavior. If an individual says he watched TV at 7 p.m. because he always watches arter finishing dinner, habit is suggested, since the content varies with the day. If a given content is presented at the same time each day the individual wathces TV, then we would want to find out whether the individual changed channels for different content. In the case of radio, the variety of formats available makes it easier to determine whether the habit-satisfaction leads to media- or content-seeking.

A second component of functions is emotional state change. When an individual engages in MS and CS he stops some activity and start another. This change -- stopping and starting -- may by viewed by the individual as a desire to move from one emotional state, e.g., boredom, loneliness, to another. Sometimes the state one wishes to leave will be expressed, "I was bored." This tells us the state one wishes to move from, but doesn't tell us much about what state the individual wishes to move towards, though it may be little more than "non-boredom."

In general, we would expect those individuals wishing to move from emotional states they view as negative to seek media rather than content. Those wishing to leave negative emotional states would more likely focus on behaviors available for fulfilling that function, including non-media behaviors, rather than on available content. What we're speaking of here are desires to change emotional states which are not combined with uncertainty about some object available in media content. However, in some situations the individual may seek content to reduce uncertainty about something and at the same time be viewed by observers as disturbed or in a state of anxiety. The individual also may seek content which he views as necessary to change emotional states -- "I was so worried that I just had to know

whether the game turned out okay."

In addition to the subjective bases of media behaviors, two objective characteristics bear consideration. One is the duration of media behaviors, i.e., the amount of time spent reading, listening, viewing. Since the "boundaries" of a media behavior are more clearly determined in the case of newspapers, we will restrict our hypothesis to that medium. Looking at MC-CS as a specificity continuum, we would expect individuals seeking more specific objects to spend less time than those seeking larger ones. Another characteristic is the manner in which the medium is used; this is more clearly conceptualized in the case of newspaper reading, when we can view movement through the paper, with reader-determined starting and stopping points. In the case of TV and radio an individual may "tune himself in and out" but the nature of the broadcast media prohibits review and self-determination of the sequence and timing of use. Since page one is the "natural" starting point for newspaper reading, we would expect those individuals seeking the medium to begin there, while those seeking content would select one of the numerous content objects scattered through the paper to begin their reading.

In addition to characteristics of media behaviors, aspects of the situational context are potentially relevant independent variables, including day and time of the media behavior, the preceding activity, and the physical location of the indiviaul using the medium.

To summarize, the following hypotheses have been made with respect to the media behavior unit:

1. Habit satisfaction will lead to media-seeking for radio listening and newspaper reading and to content-seeking for TV viewing.

2. Emotional state change will lead to media-seeking for all three media.

3. Newspaper reading which lasts for a longer period of time will tend to be media-seeking, while those lasting shorter periods will tend to be content-seeking.

4. Newspaper reading in which the individual begins on page one will tend to be media-seeking, while those behaviors with starting points within the paper will tend to be content-seeking.

Consistency Within Medium

Now, let's switch from the media behavior unit to the individual as the unit of analysis. Whether individuals are consistent in their use of a medium is an empirical question. This must be determined before we can ask whether behaviors and characteristics of individuals are related to medium consistency. When trans-situational concepts are used such consistency is usually presumed and seldom, if ever, measured. Using our conceptual model, we can examine within medium patterns to determine whether, for example, an individual's TV viewing is all MS, equally split between MS and CS, or some combination.

Several trans-situational concepts reflecting the value an individual assigns to a medium have proven useful as explanatory variables of media behavior by past researchers.* One measure of the value an individual attributes to a medium, regardless of content, is his use of the medium as a leisure-time activity. When an individual points to TV viewing as a favorite activity engaged in during his spare time, he places a positive value on the medium itself--what might be termed, "viewing for its own sake." We would expect the TV viewing of individuals citing that medium as a leisure-time activity to be proportionally more seeking than non-seeking, in comparison with those not citing the medium. An individual who refuses to watch TV because of his negative attitude toward the medium would more likely be non-seeking, resulting from the influence of others or "accidental" exposure. If it were seeking behavior then it would more likely be content-seeking of some object unavailable elsewhere at this time. The same relationship would apply to newspaper reading and radio listening.

Another measure of the value an individual attributes to a medium is its use as a vehicle for moving out of negative emotional states. Such a function is suggested by some of the reasons given for reading news articles in studies by Samuelson (1962) and Kay (1954); this also is one of the hypothesized situational

*For examples see Klapper (1960) and Kline and Tichenor (1972).

relationships. The newspaper reading of individuals citing that medium as a vehicle for moving out of states of loneliness and boredom would tend to be more seeking than non-seeking, and more media-seeking than content-seeking, in comparison with those not citing the medium as such a vehicle. The same relationship would be expected for the other media.

Individuals also may attribute value to particular content available in a medium and in such cases we would expect content-seeking rather than media seeking. An individual must know (or think he knows) content is available in a medium in order to engage in content-seeking. Although a positive attitude towards the content object is not a necessary condition for CS, such an attitude would increase the probability of movement towards the object. The media behavior of those who look forward to some content in a medium would tend to be more content-seeking than media-seeking, in comparison with those not looking forward to content in the medium.

To summarize, the hypotheses presented concerning within medium consistency are:

5a. Individuals citing a medium as a leisure-time activity will tend to engage in seeking rather than non-seeking, in comparison with those not citing the medium as a leisure-time activity.

5b. Individuals citing a medium as a leisure-time activity will tend to engage in media-seeking rather than content-seeking, in comparison with those not citing the medium as a leisure-time activity.

6a. Individuals citing a medium as a vehicle for moving out of negative emotional states will tend to engage in seeking rather than non-seeking, in comparison with those not citing the medium as such a vehicle.

6b. Individuals citing a medium as a vehicle for moving out of negative emotional states will tend to engage in media-seeking rather than content-seeking, in comparison with those not citing the medium as such a vehicle.

7. Individuals looking forward to content in a medium will tend to engage in content-seeking rather than media-seeking, in comparison with those not looking forward to anything in the medium.

Patterns Across Media

The next step involves examining patterns for consistency across media. Again, whether individuals are consistent across media is an empirical question which must be answered before we can move on to consideration of individual characteristics and behaviors which might be related to such cross-media consistency. Thus, while no hypotheses will be presented at this point, we will look at respondents' demographic characteristics in relationship to any cross-media patterns found.

A SURVEY TO TEST THE THEORY AND CONSISTENCY OF MEDIA BEHAVIORS

A random sample of two census tracts in Minneapolis was drawn for a survey designed to test the theory presented in the preceding section. The census tracts were selected to ensure adequate variability on education, income, age and socio-economic status.

A total of 98 subjects were interviewed in their homes during June, 1973*. Interviews were conducted on different days of the week, depending on scheduling difficulties. Respondents were told the survey was a study of leisure-time activities and use of the mass media, sponsored by the University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Methods

Information was obtained in two ways: (1) a two-page self-administered questionnaire and an interview schedule requiring about 45 minutes; (2) a log of media behaviors explained by interviewers and left for filling out during the three days following the interview; the logs were to be returned in stamped envelopes left by interviewers.** The logs were identified by numbers allowing them to be matched with information obtained during the interview.

The log was limited to media use in the home. For each of three days respondents were given four-page booklets, the first page containing instructions and each of the remaining three devoted to a single medium, television, radio and newspaper. Each page contained questions for three media behavior units.

Respondents were told to fill out one section at the point they decided to use but had not yet begun using a medium. The section included space for noting the time and answering this question: "Why have you decided to listen to the radio now? Please be specific." Respondents were told to fill in a second part

*The completion rate was 87 percent.

**The return rate was 54 percent

after they had finished using the medium: that section included two questions, for example, "What did you first listen to when you turned on the radio? Why did you decide to listen to that?"

The interview schedule and questionnaire contained the following: (1) questions focusing on the two most recent times an individual used each medium; interviewers, working backwards from the time of the interview, were instructed to go no further than two days back*; (2) measures of leisure-time activities, things looked forward to in each medium, and activities engaged in when wishing to move out of four emotional states; (3) measures of "gross" media use; (4) attitudes toward newspaper and TV content categories; and (5) measures of education, income, age and marital status.

The crucial sections for testing media-behavior unit relationships began with a series of questions on the most recent instance in which a medium had been used. (See Appendix A for this section of the questionnaire). The section on newspaper behaviors was followed by one on radio and that by a section on TV, each obtaining basically the same information about the two most recent times individuals used each medium. The questions enable us to determine several things necessary for making the seeking vs. non-seeking and MS-CS distinctions, including: "reasons" people give for using a medium, people's feelings at the time they decided to engage in a behavior, the types of activities involved in the seeking--changing channels or stations and consulting TV program schedules, reasons people give for selecting particular content, and activities preceding the media behavior.

Coding The Dependent Variables

The dependent variable was coded through a sequence of steps in which each media behavior unit was determined to be, first, seeking or non-seeking, second, media- or content-seeking, and third, for those which were CS, information or "gross" content-seeking.

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*Recall was expected to become increasingly unreliable beyond such a time period.

Media behaviors were determined to be non-seeking if the individual did not contrdict his assertion that the influence of "others" was the reason for engaging in the behavior, e.g., someone else turned TV on, had to listen because was in car and someone else wanted to, radio came on with alarm clock. The clock radio was arbitrarily classified as non-seeking since this study was interested in the "reasons" existing just before the actual viewing, reading or listening; distant reasons which an individual wants fulfilled might be interrupted or fulfilled days or hours later and would not be a component of a media behavior as stipulated by our model.

Behaviors determined to be instances of seeking were divided into those in which the individual's reason mentioned content and those where content was not mentioned. Those not mentioning content were coded as media-seeking unless the respondent at one of several points later on affirmed desire to see, hear or read some content object as the "reasons" he decided to engage in the media behavior. For example, in the case of newspaper, after telling "why you decided to read the paper," individuals were asked for the first thing read, then asked: "Did you pick up the paper to read this or did this come to your mind after you had already picked it up?" Thus, individuals were given several chances to "correct" or change their initial reason for engaging in the media behavior in the interview session. Such checks were expected to be useful as additional recall of facts about the particular situation brought the behavior into clearer focus.* For the log no such checks were necessary, since respondents were asked to tell why they were going to read the paper before actually starting their reading. Here the answers were searched for mention of other's influence and content to make the determinations.

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*For example, one respondent, when asked why she had decided to read the paper, said: "Well, I first looked for the name of a POW kid from (town). Then I looked for the general reaction of POWs." When then asked if she picked up the paper to read this, or whether it came to mind afterwards, she replied: "I read it because it was the news of the day. That happened to be the headline and I remembered that I knew a kid who was a POW." This is an example of a respondent whose response would have been coded content-seeking had she not corrected the initial comment.

Those instances coded as content-seeking were examined further for specificity of content sought. (See Appendix B for table outlining categories). A 10 percent sample of interviews and logs was systematically drawn for a second cloding. An inter-coder agreement of 85.5 percent was obtained; the figure was based on coding of more than 100 instances into the following categories: "undetermined" (because of conflicting or inadequate information), non-seeking, media-seeking or content-seeking broken down into the categories of specificity listed in Appendix B. Sometimes subjects contradicted rather than clarified, and in those cases the behavior was classified as missing data. One respondent, for example, said he turned the radio on for "some company." When later asked if he had turned it on to listen to a particular kind of music (which had been mentioned as first thing heard), he hesitated and added, "I guess maybe I was searching for music." The greater the time period intervening between the actual behavior and the interview, the more frequently incomplete recall produced such situations.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Media Behavior as Analytic Unit

A total of 589 instances of media behavior from the interview and log were coded for the dependent variable, with somewhat similar totals for each medium. However, an examination of the distributions by medium shows strikingly different patterns; television viewing is almost three-quarters content-seeking, while two-thirds of newspaper reading behaviors are media-seeking. A closer balance between MS and CS is found for listening to the radio, the only medium for which much non-seeking was found, as Table 1 illustrates.

Table 1*

	Newspaper	Radio	Television	
Non-seeking	2 (1%)	41 (19%)	7 (4%)	50 (9%)
Media-seeking	132 (66%)	94 (45%)	40 (22%)	266 (45%)
Content-seeking	66 (33%)	75 (36%)	132 (74%)	273 (46%)
Totals:	200	210	179	589

$x^2 = 127.9$ $p < .001$

The different patterns point out the contrasting ways in which people apparently view newspapers and television. Newspapers are more often sought as objects themselves, with relatively fewer instances of seeking specific content and making distinctions among available content. In contrast, TV is viewed as being composed of content segments, all readily indexed in weekly schedules. The log distributions for radio and newspapers are somewhat different from the interview, with considerably larger percentage of media behaviors being media-seeking. (See Appendix C, Table 1). One factor which may account for the difference is the restriction of log reporting to media use at home, while interview data included behaviors that occurred elsewhere, e.g., at work, in cars, at the laundromat. Another possibility is that probing introduced some unrealiability; at times respondents may have had "second thoughts" during the probing, opting for content-seeking when in reality they had decided to use a medium without any initial regard for content objects. Consequently, analyses were conducted for the interview and log separately when total responses on an item were sufficiently large to permit analysis; this happened infrequently. Hypothesized relationships tend to be stronger in the log data then in that from the interview; combining resulted in weakening the relationships.

*A total of 224 behaviors were not determined to be NS/MS/CS because of inadequate or conflicting information, including: 65, newspapers; 68, TV; 91 radio.

Habit

Our first hypotheses was that habit satisfaction would lead to media-seeking for radio-listening and paper reading, and to content-seeking for TV viewing. The mention of "habit" terms, e.g., "usually," "always," in "reasons" given for engaging in media behaviors was coded for a test of the hypothesis. As table 2 indicates, the expected relationship between content-seeking and "habit" was found for TV viewing, but the hypothesized relationship between media-seeking and habit for radio listening and paper reading was not found.

TABLE 2*

	TV Viewing		Radio Listening		Paper Reading	
	MS	CS	MS	CS	MS	CS
No Habit Terms Mentioned	36	105	72	58	72	41
Habit Terms Mentioned	3	27	23	17	59	29
	$X = 4.16$ $p < .05$		$X^2 = .08$ N.S.		$x^2 = .332$ N.S.	

A media behavior may be habitual in terms of time, its connection with another activity, or its place in a sequence of activities. These aspects were coded when cited in "reasons" for engaging in media behavior. In the case of radio, listening was often tied to another activity; for example, numerous times respondents said they "usually listen to the radio when driving" or eating, or "turned the radio on because I was going to do some tedious work." In cases where radio listening was tied to such activities the behaviors tend to be MS, while others tend to be CS, as Table 3 shows.*

*Since the hypothesis concerned only seeking behaviors, the non-seeking behaviors are not included in the tables.

TABLE 3*

	Radio Listening	
	MS	CS
Listening Tied to Activity	30	8
Listening Not Tied to Activity and no Habit	64	67
N =	(94)	(75)

$\chi^2 = 11.2$ $p < .001$

Reading the newspaper was often fit into a sequence of activities, e.g., "I always read the paper after dinner," "That's the time I read the paper during the week." When habit was mentioned in this manner in the log the reading was media-seeking, but no relationship was found for the interview and when the two were combined the log relationship disappeared.

Emotional State

If respondents were in negative emotional states prior to media use, their behaviors were expected to be media-seeking, while positive states would tend toward content-seeking. In the interview session respondents were asked to select from among two negative and two positive states the one which best described how they felt just prior to engaging in a media behavior;** the paper reading and radio listening of these who felt "badly" did tend to be media-seeking, however, too

*Some of the instances of radio listening in Table 3 were accompanied by such terms as "always" or "usually," while others were tied to an activity minus such terms; thus, Table 3 is not simply an elaboration of the data in Table 1. Some of the instances of habitual radio listening in Table 2 were not tied to other activities and, thus, are missing from Table 3, while some instances minus the "habit" terms have been added.

**The four emotional states, listed on a card handed to respondents, were: (A) I felt pretty good (happy, excited, satisfied). (B) I felt generally OK, about like usual. (C) I felt somewhat 'blah' (bored, worried). (D) I felt pretty bad (disappointed, angry, frustrated).

few were in negative states to compute statistical significance tests.

Since the preceding measure was obtained only for interviews, mentions of feelings in "reasons" were coded in both logs and interviews for an additional test of our second hypothesis. Such mention also indicates the saliency of emotion for engaging in the behavior.

Too few mentioned feelings for a test of the relationship for TV viewing, but the radio listening and paper reading of those mentioning such emotions tended to be media-seeking, as Table 4 illustrates.

Table 4*

	Radio Listening		Paper Reading	
	MS	CS	MS	CS
Negative feelings mentioned	10	2	20	2
No feelings mentioned	41	53	111	68
N =	(51)	(55)	(131)	(70)
	$X = 6.94$		$X = 7.19$	
	$p < .01$		$p < .01$	

Among the components of "reasons" coded was the notion of "filling time." In both the log and interview numerous respondents said they watched TV or read the newspaper"to kill time," "because there was nothing else to do", "I wanted some noise to fill the time while I was alone", etc. Such coments indicate a state of boredom or loneliness and were used as an additional test of the hypothesis. For both TV viewing and paper reading these behaviors in which "time-filling" was a salient component of the reason tended to be media-seeking. There were too few mentions of "time-filling" to test the relationship with radio listening.

*Since the hypothesis concerned only seeking behaviors, the non-seeking behaviors are not included in the table.

Table 5*

	Television Viewing		Paper Reading	
	MS	CS	MS	CS
'Time-Filler' Mentioned	12	2	27	5
'Time-Filler' Unmentioned	64	89	105	61
N =	(76)	(91)	(132)	(66)

$x^2 = 10.42$, $p < .005$ $\quad$ $x^2 = 5.56$, $p < .025$

Time and Starting Point

Two other characteristics of media behaviors expected to be related to the media- and content-seeking distinction of newspaper reading were time spent reading and the starting point. We had expected that behaviors lasting longer would be MS while those lasting shorter time periods would be CS (hypothesis no. 3). As Table 6 indicates, this tends to be the case, but the relationship is not statistically significant.

Table 6*

		Newspaper Reading	
		MS	CS
Time spent reading paper	15 minutes or less	20	27
	More than 15 minutes	39	34
		N = (59)	(61)

$x^2 = 1.35$ N.S.

*Since the hypothesis concerned only seeking behaviors, the non-seeking behaviors are not included in the table.

In cases where individuals began at the "natural" starting point, page one, the newspaper reading was expected to be media-seeking, while other starting points, e.g., sports page, classified advertising, etc., would tend to be content-seeking. This hypothesis, No. 4, was supported, as Table 7 shows.

Table 7*

	Newspaper Reading	
	MS	CS
Page one	36	17
Others	13	44
N =	(49)	(61)

$X = 22.6$ $p < .001$

Other Variables

The relationship between MS-CS and day, time, preceding activity and physical location while engaging in the media behavior also were examined. Radio listening in cars tends to be CS. Proportionally more TV viewing in the evening is MS than that during the afternoon and morning; radio listening tends towards relatively more content seeking occuring in the afternoon and more media-seeking in the evening, with most non-seeking occuring in the morning.

*Since the bypothesis concerned only seeking behaviors, the non-seeking behaviors are not included.

Consistency Within Medium

At least two instances of media behavior determined to be MS, NS or CS were required for an individual to be included in the analysis of consistency within medium. An individual's TV viewing was termed media-seeking if at least 51 percent of his viewing was MS; the same criteria was applied for one's behavior to be termed content-seeking or non-seeking. When there was an equal number of MS and CS, or a mixed pattern with some MS, CS, NS combination--no single one constituting 50 percent or more--the individual's medium behavior was called "Mixed."

As Table 8 indicates, there is a high degree of consistency, with only 15 percent of individuals' patterns being Mixed for newspapers, 13 percent for radio and 8 percent for television. Distributions indicate differences amongst the media, with a larger percentage of respondents being CS in TV viewing than in the other two media behaviors. In the case of radio, most listeners tend to media-seek, although there are a number whose listening is mostly non-seeking--these are primarily the result of alarm-clock radios.

Table 8
Consistency Within Medium

	Newspaper	Radio	Television
Non-seeking	0	10	3
Media-seeking	28	24	14
Mixed (equal, comb.)	10	9	6
Content-seeking	27	27	51
N =	(65)	(70)	(74)

With such consistency we can now proceed to examine relationships between within-medium patterns and our trans-situational variables. However, the small number of consistent non-seeking patterns makes it impossible to test the hypotheses dealing with the seeking vs. non-seeking distinction -- hypotheses 5a and 6a.

Individuals citing a medium as a leisure-time activity were expected to be MS more than CS (hypothesis 5b). Again, too few cited media as leisure-time activities to test the predicted relationship for newspapers and radios; however, the two mentioning newspaper reading were both MS and a larger percentage of those citing TV viewing as a leisure-time activity were MS than those not citing the medium.

Respondents were asked what they would do in four negative emotional states they wished to move out of; those citing media as vehicles were expected to engage in media-seeking more than content-seeking (hypothesis 6b). Too few citations of media prevented analysis for individual emotional states; mentions of a medium across the four states were compiled for a combined measure. Only the medium of TV received enough citations for a test of the hypothesis; although those citing TV tend to be more MS than those not mentioning the medium, the relationship is not statistically significant.

Those individuals looking forward to content in a medium were expected to be more consistantly content-seeking than those not indicating such behavior. No relationship was found for radio or newspapers, although a larger percentage of those citing TV programs looked forward to were CSers than those mentioning no programs, as Table 9 demonstrates.

Table 9

	Television		Newspaper		Radio	
	Other Patterns	CS	Other Patterns	CS	Other Patterns	CS
Look forward to medium content	14	43	33	23	23	9
Don't look forward to medium content	9	8	8	4	20	18
	N =(23)	(51)	(41)	(27)	(43)	(27)
	$X = 4.87$ $p < .05$		$X = .304$ N.S.		$X = 2.81$ N.S.	

With a couple of small exceptions, demographic variables do not make much difference in whether people are consistently MS or CS for any of the three media.

Consistency Across Media

Individual patterns of media use were mapped for those respondents who had used at least two media.* Patterns were then divided into "pure" types (only MS or CS), predominantly one type (two media being MS or CS), and those which were mixed (no media being MS or CS). As Table 10 illustrates, the most frequently occurring was the mixed pattern, followed by the predominantly CS pattern. Lack of consistency across media is emphasized by the relatively small number of pure patterns, only 22 percent.

*The patterns of 22 respondents were not determined because they had not used the minimum of two media; a medium was included only if two media behavior units were coded as NS, MS or CS. These determinations, made to examine within medium consistency, constituted the data points for examining cross-media patterns.

Table 10

Consistency Across Media

Pure types:		
Media-seeking	5	
Content-seeking	12	17
Predominantly MS/CS:		
Media-seeking	5	
Content-seeking	19	24
Mixed		35
total		76

No patterns were found in which two or three media were 51 percent or more non-seeking. Only one of the demographic variables examined appears to be related to the three types of patterns. (See Table 2, Appendix C). A larger percentage of younger people have MS patterns, while middle-aged respondents tend towards mixed patterns and older people towards content-seeking patterns. Education, age, sex and marital status do not appear to be useful for indicating one's cross-media pattern.

Summary

This paper has looked at media behaviors at three levels starting with media-behavior unit at the situational level and later examining relationships dependent upon within medium and across-media consistency. Non-seeking, media-seeking and content-seeking, characteristics of the media-behavior unit, constituted the dependent variable.

At the situational level, two subjective bases were found to be related to media-seeking and content-seeking. Mention of "habit" terms in "reasons" given for TV viewing tends to be related to CS, while radio listening tied to activity, e.g., working, driving, tends to be media-seeking. The second subjective basis, desire to leave a negative emotional state, tends to be media-seeking for each of the three media. Two objective characteristics of media behaviors were examined for newspaper reading. In cases where the reading began on page one, the behaviors tend

to be media-seeking, while those with other starting points tend to be content-seeking. Newspaper reading which lasts for 15 minutes or less tends to be CS, while those lasting longer tend to be MS; however, the relationship is not statistically significant.

A high degree of consistency was found for within medium behavior, with only 15 percent of the patterns being mixed for papers, 13 percent for radio and 8 percent for TV. Distributions indicate differences amongst the media, with a larger percentage of respondents being CS in TV viewing than in the other two media behaviors. With such consistency, relationships between within-medium patterns and trans-situational variables were examined. There were too few mentions of media as leisure-time activities or as vehicles for moving out of negative emotional states to test the hypothesized relationships for radio listening or newspaper reading; those mentioning TV do tend to be MS but the relationships are not statistically significant. The third trans-situational variable, looking forward to content in a medium, was expected to be related to content-seeking; this was found to be the case for TV but not the other two media.

Little consistency was found across the three media, with 17 individuals being only MS or only CS on two or three media. An additional 24 were predominantly MS or CS and 35 were Mixed, no two media being the same.

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APPENDIX A

II.

Now I'd like to review some of your recent media activities, reading the newspaper, watching television and listening to the radio. I'm going to ask some of the questions several times because we need this specific information. It may be hard to remember some of these things so take your time and don't rush.

A. Did you read a newspaper today? (IF ANSWER IS NO, ASK FOR YESTERDAY, AND IF NONE WAS READ YESTERDAY, SKIP ON TO III. CHECK DAY ON WHICH PAPER WAS READ.)

___today ___yesterday

1. When did you first read a newspaper (today)?_____

2. What paper did you read?_____

3. Where were you at the time you started to read the paper?_____

_____

4. Do you recall what you were doing just before you decided to read the paper?

_____

5. I'd like you to look at this card and tell me which one best describes how you felt just before you decided to read the paper. (HAND CARD A TO RESPONDENT)

_____

6. Now I'd like you to try to recall why you decided to read the paper. You were (SUBSTITUTE PRECEDING ACTIVITY) and then read the paper. Why did You decide to read the paper?

_____

_____

7. What did you first read in the paper?_____

_____

___Specific article or topic mentioned (ASK Q.9)

___Page, section, category mentioned (ASK Q.8)

8. Did you ___pick up the paper to read this, or

___did this come to your mind after you had already picked it up?

a. What article or topic did you first read?_____

_____

b. Why did you read that?_____

_____ (SKIP TO Q.10)

9. Did you ___pick up the paper to read this, or

___did this come to your mind after you had already picked it up?

a. Why did you read that?_____

_____

APPENDIX A II (cont.)

10. What did you read next?_____

_____

11. About how much time did you spend reading the paper?_____

12. Do you usually read the paper at this time?_____

APPENDIX B

SPECIFICITY CATEGORIES OF CONTENT-SEEKING

Newspaper*

Low	1	2	3	4	High
	-the "news" -the headlines -the main story (no more elaboration)	-page one -a section -a type of news	-a column -other paper fixture (comics)	-specific topic -specific article	

Radio*

Low	1	2	3	High
	-only a station -just music -what's going on -multiple offerings	-type of music -news/weather program -other named program	-specific news topic -time	

Television

Low	1	2	High
	-specific program (name) -news as program	-news topic -object, something specific happening in a program	

*Viewing MS-CS as a continuum of specificity, we added the first category above to MS for better distributions. In the case of newspapers about a half dozen media behavior units fell into the first category; for radio about 45 were in the first category. Since television was divided into fewer categories, no such changes were made.

APPENDIX C

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF NS, CS, MS

		Newspaper	Radio	Television	
Interview:	Non-seeking	1 (1%)	27 (20%)	4 (4%)	32 (9%)
	Content-seeking	58 (49%)	56 (41%)	82 (73%)	196 (53%)
	Media-seeking	59 (50%)	54 (39%)	26 (23%)	139 (38%)
	N =	(118)	(137)	(112)	(367)
Log:	Non-seeking	1 (1%)	14 (19%)	3 (4%)	18 (8%)
	Content-seeking	2 (10%)	19 (26%)	50 (75%)	77 (35%)
	Media-seeking	73 (89%)	40 (55%)	14 (21%)	127 (57%)
	N =	(82)	(73)	(67)	(222)

Table 2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND MEDIA PATTERNS

	30 or younger	31-45*	46 or older*
Mostly MS	8	1	1
Mixed	14	10	8
Mostly CS	7	8	14
	(29)	(19)	(23)

*Combining these two categories, $x^2 = 9.961$, $p < .01$